

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (amended) A panel comprising two or more heterokaryons wherein each of said heterokaryons produces a different variant of a multimeric protein and each heterokaryon is formed by fusing a first and a second fungal parent strain, wherein said heterokaryon requires the presence of both fungal parent nuclei for survival, said first and said second parent fungal strain each contain[s] an exogenously supplied nucleic acid molecule that encodes a variant of a subunit of a multimeric protein, wherein at least one exogenously supplied nucleic acid molecule is randomly generated or rationally designed, and where said first and said second parent strains are homozygous for all heterokaryon compatibility alleles.

a1 2. (amended) The panel of claim 1 wherein [each of said] at least one variant[s] of a subunit of a multimeric protein [are] is naturally occurring [subunit variants].

3. (amended) The panel of claim 1 wherein [each of] said [variants of a subunit of a] multimeric protein [are not naturally occurring subunit variants] is a heteromultimeric protein.

7. (amended) A method for producing a panel of heterokaryons comprising two or more heterokaryons wherein each of said heterokaryons produces a multimeric protein comprising the steps of:

a2 fusing [two or more] at least a pair of first and second fungal parent strains, said first and said second parent fungal strains each containing an exogenously supplied nucleic acid molecule that encodes a variant of a subunit of a multimeric protein, wherein at least one exogenously supplied nucleic acid molecule is randomly generated or rationally designed, and where said first and said second parent strains are homozygous for all heterokaryon compatibility alleles and selecting two or more heterokaryons thus formed to generate said panel, wherein said heterokaryon requires the presence of both fungal parent nuclei for survival.

8. (amended) The method of claim 7 wherein [said] at least one variant of a subunit of a multimeric protein is [a] naturally occurring [subunit variant].

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cont. 9. (amended) The method of claim 7 wherein said [variant of a subunit of a] multimeric protein is [not a naturally occurring subunit variant] a heteromultimeric protein.

14. (amended) A method to identify an agent that binds to a member of a panel of variants of a multimeric protein, said method comprising the step[s] of incubating [the panel of variants of claim 13] a panel

a3 comprising two or more heterokaryons wherein each of said heterokaryons produces a different variant of a multimeric protein and each heterokaryon is formed by fusing a first and a second fungal parent strain, wherein said heterokaryon requires the presence of both fungal parent nuclei for survival, said first and said second parent fungal strain each contain an exogenously supplied nucleic acid molecule that encodes a variant of a subunit of a multimeric protein and where said first and said second parent strains are homozygous for all heterokaryon compatibility alleles

with an agent to be tested and determining whether said agent binds to one or more [members] heterokaryons of said panel.

a4 15. A method to identify an agent that binds to a member of a panel of variants of a multimeric protein, said method comprising the steps of incubating the panel of any one of claims 1-5 with an agent to be tested and determining whether said agent binds to one or more heterokaryons of said panel.

REMARKS

The above amendments to claims 1-3 and 7-9, as well as claim 15, direct them to encompass preferred embodiments of the invention. Support for the amendments is provided at least on page 3, lines 10-13; page 4, lines 3-4; page 8, line 28, to page 9, line 1; page 9, lines 16-29; and page 25, lines 18-29 of the specification. The amendment to claim 14 merely